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## **THE FORGOTTEN SLAVISM. A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE DEPRECIATION OF THE MEMORY CONCERNING THE SLAVIC HERITAGE IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULA IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The presented study explores the ways in which two events from the history of Poland – the baptism of Mieszko I and the so-called ‘pagan reaction’ – are shown in history textbooks and curricula. Both of these events are treated here as remembrance sites, creating the historical canon, which constitutes one of the pillars of Poles’ memory of the past. The method of public discourse analysis was applied. The analysis of textbooks and curricula showed that while the christening of Poland is presented as an exceptional remembrance site in its history (one of the major events constituting the historical canon), the so-called pagan reaction is a hardly noticeable event. The attitude to the Slavic past, which is characteristic for the analyzed texts, can be placed within the discourse of depreciation, to which the argumentation, linguistic means, and the symbolism have been subordinated.

### **Key words:**

Slavism, baptism of Poland, pagan reaction, collective memory, remembrance sites, textbooks, curricula, discourse of depreciation

## 1. Introduction

Apart from its critical, literary, and sociological functions, Maria Janion's book, meaningfully entitled, *Niesamowita Słowiańszczyzna*, published in 2006, has become an inherent part of critical pedagogy – the pedagogy that represents those whose opinions are often doomed to silence<sup>1</sup>. Janion even writes about “a specific Slavic trauma, the feeling of belonging to the side of the weaker, harmed, enslaved and humiliated, deprived of a certain concealed legacy, unjustly forgotten and rejected, or smashed by the process called historical advancement”<sup>2</sup>. This quotation *de facto* suggests the existence of a parallel between the ‘Slavic trauma’ and the trauma of other peoples, i.e. ‘colonized’ and forced to be silent, the peoples whose cultural output was doomed to oblivion. Monika Rudaś-Grodzka, quoted by Maria Janion, states, “The christianization of Poland, over many centuries, presented as a necessary stage in the crystallization of national identity, is in fact the winners’ official version of history”<sup>3</sup>.

Besides its revealing view, Janion's book invites an alternative discourse, built from the standpoint of the disabled, silent, and often forgotten social groups, which corresponds to the literary current discussing various types of asymmetry in interpersonal relations. The motifs of asymmetry, as well as of cultural oblivion or selective remembrance of Slavism, constitute the subject matter of the presented considerations, which can be placed both within the sociology of knowledge (in the French sociological tradition the practice of the sociology of cognition is also discussed – *la sociologie de la connaissance*) and in the perspective of the sociology of education. Some attempts are made in this study to reproduce these motifs on the basis of the schoolbook and curriculum narrations about two events from the earliest stages of Polish history. The presentation of the results of the analysis of textbook contents will be preceded by a brief outline of the conceptual apparatus that has come into being on the foundation of the above-mentioned sociological sub-disciplines.

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<sup>1</sup> H.A. Giroux, R.I. Simon, *Schooling, Popular Culture, and a Pedagogy of Possibility* [in:] *Sociology of Education. Major Themes. Institutions and Processes*, S.J. Ball (ed.), Vol. III, London–New York 2000, p. 1541.

<sup>2</sup> M. Janion, *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna. Fantazmaty literatury*, Kraków 2006, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> M. Rudaś-Grodzka, *Słowiańszczyzna. Pamięć i zapomnienie w wykładach Adama Mickiewicza i powieściach Józefa Ignacego Kraszewskiego*, „Konteksty” 2003, No. 1–2, p. 222.

## 2. Theoretical and methodological assumptions

The issue of the Slavic heritage should be undertaken from the standpoint of collective memory. According to tradition, the classical approach to collective memory is attributed to Maurice Halbwachs, although it was based on the French sociological school (Durkheim's school) and many other representatives of this school (e.g. Henri Hubert, Émile Durkheim, or Stefan Czarnowski) should be credited with its elaboration. Collective memory, as a social construct subjected to unceasing reinterpretation, consists of remembrance sites (*les lieux de mémoire*)<sup>4</sup>. These might be geographically defined places or objects, as well as symbols, and events from the history of a particular group. What seems significant is that through remembrance sites the members of this group define their own identity, which, like collective memory, is not given once and forever, but undergoes permanent modification. Constructing one's own identity (the feeling of both who one is and of one's own subjectiveness) is based, among other things, on adopting categories that include certain individuals and exclude others (e.g. man-woman, father-daughter). It also involves viewing oneself as belonging to the world in a certain way and interpreting the world from a certain perspective, which brings about the emotional bonds with a particular category and the development of a moral system organized around belonging to this category<sup>5</sup>. Nationality and its related notion of identity are such categories.

Collective memory is built on collective representations, unlike individual memory, which is constructed by individual representations (*représentations individuelles*) or, simply, images<sup>6</sup>. Remembrance sites, as the constituents of collective memory, should be understood simply as kinds of collective representations, the existence of which depends on cross-generation transmission ensuring the continuity of culture. What Émile Durkheim formulated in the context of cultural transmission was his classical definition of education as activity performed on socially immature individuals by the adult generation, who by applying appropriate educational procedures should arouse the desired physical, intellectual, and moral states<sup>7</sup>. As Dur-

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<sup>4</sup> *Les Lieux de mémoire*, P. Nora (ed.), Vol. I, Paris 1984.

<sup>5</sup> B. Davies, *The Discursive Production of the Male/Female Dualism in School Settings* [in:] *Sociology of Education. Major Themes. Institutions and Processes*, S.J. Ball (ed.), Vol. III, London–New York 2000, p. 1386.

<sup>6</sup> T. Banaszczyk, *Studia o przedstawieniach zbiorowych czasu i przestrzeni w durkheimowskiej szkole socjologicznej*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1989, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> É. Durkheim, *Éducation et sociologie*, Chicoutimi 2002, p. 10, [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim\\_emile/education\\_socio/education\\_socio.doc](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/Durkheim_emile/education_socio/education_socio.doc) [access: 04.05.2012].

kheim claims, the essence of education (*éducation*) is creating the frames of mind. In other words, it is the transmission of rational categories (*notions mères* – ‘mother-notions’) that allows for understanding how society functions<sup>8</sup>. The issues that are characteristic for the sociology of knowledge (cognition) overlap here with the subject matter of the sociology of education. Halbwachs writes that parents are the first pass down notions (collective representations) of people and objects<sup>9</sup>. Various institutions, with a particular emphasis on the role of school, continue this parental socialization. The socialization itself should be treated as the process of cross-generation transmission of collective representations (including representations of heroes, holidays or various events). Collective memory ought to be viewed as constantly subjected to reinterpretation, the memory of a particular community concerning the people and events that constitute this group’s identity whereas historical memory constitutes an attempt at an objectivized interpretation of the past. It seems natural that the remembrance sites constituting the identity of Poles, constructing their collective memory (as well as historical memory) – a pillar of collective social identity – should be located not earlier than the birth of Mieszko I’s state. This triggers a natural conclusion that important remembrance sites appeared along with the Christianization of the state of Polans. These considerations correspond to Danièle Hervieu-Léger’s concept of religion as memory<sup>10</sup>. Inspired by the French sociological school, the author treats religion as a spiritual unity of ancestors, contemporary people and their future descendants, as a unity legitimized by tradition, which she calls ‘authorized memory’ (*la mémoire autorisée*)<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, as long as there are bonds between generations, as well as the transmission of collective representations within a particular religious community, the existence of a certain religion can be confirmed. Applying Hervieu-Léger’s concept of religion, it should be noticed that what occurred in the case of Slavs was the oblivion (amnesia) concerning the common past—forgetting about important remembrance sites on the one hand, and breaking the bonds with the progenitors on the other. It seems also of crucial significance that this oblivion was an effect of including the Slavic heritage in the type of discourse which Axel Honneth named the discourse of contempt. Juxtaposing the category of social contempt (*le mépris*) and social recognition (*la reconnaissance*), Axel Honneth draws attention to the fact that the practice of recognition brings about the growing subordination of

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<sup>8</sup> G. Minois, *Les grands pédagogues de Socrate aux cyberprofs*, Paris 2006, p. 288.

<sup>9</sup> M. Halbwachs, *Społeczne ramy pamięci*, Warszawa 2008, p. 228.

<sup>10</sup> D. Hervieu-Léger, *Religia jako pamięć*, Kraków 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Eadem, *La religion en mouvement. Le pèlerin et le converti*, Paris 1999, p. 24.

individuals at the cost of their autonomy. At the same time, this practice becomes an instrument of symbolic politics, the function of which is the integration of individuals or groups as subordinated and constructing their positive image<sup>12</sup>. The 'contempt' of the promoters of the new religion towards pagan religions did not result in the total removal of any traces of their existence, but rather in the ongoing inculturation, as Anton Wessels stated<sup>13</sup>. What will be applied in the further part of the study is the term 'discourse of depreciation' instead of a more emphatic expression 'discourse of contempt'.

The considerations above aimed to present the relations between collective memory (including historical one) and the identity of social group, which constructs its own past by 'recalling' past events and the remembrance of the heroes. This does not concern the non-problem activity of reconstructing the past in accordance with Aristotle's definition of truth as *adeqvatio rei et intellectus*, but it concerns the unceasing reinterpretation, each time related to the sphere of axiological choices which also lead to forgetting certain fragments of the past. In contemporary societies, the institution of school plays a key role in the process of collective memory transmission, especially from the perspective of the unification of memory. In history classes, mainly owing to the textbook as didactic tool, learners familiarize themselves with the historical canon, which is understood by Andrzej Szpociński as a set of remembrance sites<sup>14</sup>. The author notices that the analysis of memory of the past can be carried out in three dimensions: of the ancestors; of the historical canon (past events and personalities that one should familiarize with); and of the values, ideas, and behavior patterns. What is suggested for the needs of this study is a more narrow perspective for analyzing the past, which would be comprised of the analysis of the historical canon and only indirectly (in reference to the canon) the other two dimensions. The analyses below are examples of the study of public discourse, a part of which is the discourse of symbolic elites (e.g. academic, artistic, and church discourse). Undoubtedly, the examination of school textbooks and curricula can be recognized as an exemplification of the analysis of the symbolic elites' discourse on historical memory. One of its elements is the analysis of the presence of ideology in the investigated texts. Ideologies are significant cultural resources, "relatively fluid resources of interpretation, or pro-

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<sup>12</sup> A. Honneth, *La société du mépris. Vers une nouvelle Théorie critique*, Paris 2006, p. 245.

<sup>13</sup> A. Wessels, *Europe: Was It Ever Really Christian? The Interaction Between Gospel and Culture*, London 1994; G. Smith, *A Short History of Secularism*, London–New York 2008, pp. 74–82.

<sup>14</sup> A. Szpociński, *Przemiany obrazu przeszłości Polski. Analiza słuchowisk historycznych dla szkół podstawowych 1951–1984*, Warszawa 1989, p. 19.

vided by culture repertoires of categorization, symbols and argumentation, which acquire a particular sense only when they are used ('activated') in a certain situation and appropriately adjusted to it"<sup>15</sup>. This resource consists of the most frequent arguments, specific phraseology and rhetoric, characteristic images, and symbols. The analyses that follow are dedicated to the reconstruction of interpretative resources that are characteristic for textbook discourse, which are activated due to the presentation of two events (commemoration sites) from the history of Poland – Mieszko I's baptism and the so-called pagan reaction.

Ideology is perceived here as a set of views and beliefs prevailing in a certain environment. In this case, in the environment of the symbolic elite represented here by historians. Ideologies describe the world, explain it, and legitimize it. In this sense, a textbook can be treated as an interpretation of the symbolic elite's ideology. Ideology is manifested in language, in the way of narration and argumentation, and in describing and explaining the world. Thus, it can be seen that the theoretical framework of the analysis below will be indicated by the sociology of knowledge. Yet, these analyses are a part of social construction of the school reality, which is the subject of the sociology of education. This occurs because analyzing textbooks and curricula comprises the issue of reconstructing the past. In the perspective of constructing collective and historical memory, the focus is on the previously mentioned motif of the selective presence of Slavism in school textbooks, which is treated in this study not as a tool for passing objective knowledge, but as a tool for legitimizing the ideology of a particular social group.

The operationalization of the research problems necessitated the distinguishing of three fields of analysis: 1) of the argumentation presented by textbook authors and curricula designers; 2) of linguistic means (phrasemes, semantic transformations, or tropes, e. g. epithets, metaphors or periphrases); 3) of the dominating images and symbolics. The textbook and curriculum analysis, meant to exemplify the thesis on the depreciation of Slavic places of remembrance in schoolbooks discourse, comprised the history course books and curricula for both lower- and upper-secondary schools that were published between 1993 and 2009. Altogether, 32 textbooks and seven history syllabi were subjected to analysis. 68 text units were selected for the final analysis (34 texts on the baptism of Poland and 34 on the pagan reaction). The list of the analyzed materials is comprised at the end of the study.

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<sup>15</sup> M. Czyżewski, *Wprowadzenie* [in:] *Rytualny chaos. Studium dyskursu publicznego*, M. Czyżewski, S. Kowalski, A. Piotrowski (eds.), Kraków 1997, p. 25.



### 3. Conclusions

The examined textbooks present an 'alternativeless' interpretation of the Christianization of the Polans' state. Being 'alternativeless' is viewed here as the presence in some textbooks and curricula of the thesis, derived from *par excellence* history of philosophy, about abandoning the Slavic heritage as an element of the historical process that enabled access to 'the European commonwealth of Christian states,' but also resulted in the lack of any reflection upon the lost legacy. We call this phenomenon the discourse of depreciation, which we juxtapose to the discourse of recognition. The latter refers to the way of presenting the reasons, which justify Mieszko I's decision. The discourse of depreciation is manifested not so much by the presence of offensive phrases or arguments (these occur sporadically), but rather by rejecting *a priori* the arguments of the other side. The questions, such as "Give arguments for and against Mieszko I's decision," that appear in some analyzed texts seem to be 'tagged' to texts and do not result from the course of narration, where arguments against are practically absent<sup>16</sup>.

With regards to the argumentation in the case of narration about the baptism of Poland, it can be divided into two dimensions: the political (including domestic and foreign policy) and the cultural dimensions. While authors pay attention to the political advantages of accepting Christianization in political argumentation, it is mostly the civilizing significance of Christianization (the contact with Western societies which knew writing, the contact with Western architecture, painting, law) that is focused on in the argumentation of the cultural nature.

The above-mentioned political merits of the baptism were associated with the implementation of new models of state and church organization<sup>17</sup>, the accelerated

<sup>16</sup> See: W. Bobiński, *Historia ludzi. Pierwsza klasa gimnazjum. Od czasów najdawniejszych do pierwszych odkryć geograficznych*, Kraków 2000, p. 268; D. Musiał, K. Polacka, S. Roszak, *Historia. Podręcznik dla I klasy gimnazjum*, Gdańsk 1999, p. 95; D. Musiał, K. Polacka, S. Roszak, *Przez wieki. Podręcznik do historii*, Gdańsk 2002, p. 125.

<sup>17</sup> D. Bąkowski, *Historia 1. Podręcznik dla uczniów gimnazjum*, Rumia 2002, p. 125; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2002, p. 143; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Wydanie drugie zmienione*, Gdynia 2004, p. 126; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Gdynia 2005, p. 126; G. Kucharczyk, P. Milcarek, M. Robak, *Przez tysiąclecia i wieki. Cywilizacje starożytności i średniowiecza. Klasa I*, Warszawa 2002, p. 204; H. Manikowska, J. Tazbirowa, *Historia. Średniowiecze. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich klasy I liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum i liceum zawodowego*, Warszawa 1993, p. 52; D. Musiał, K. Polacka, S. Roszak, *Historia. Podręcznik dla I klasy gimnazjum...*, op.cit., p. 94; J. Ustrzycki, *Historia. Podręcznik dla gimnazjum*, Rumia 2007, p. 182; M. Węcowski,



integration of the state<sup>18</sup>, and the change in the rank of Mieszko I's state in the international arena<sup>19</sup>. The cultural merits of the baptism are highlighted by the

P. Węcowski, J. Czuby, *Historia. Podręcznik klasa I. Szkoły ponadgimnazjalne. Zakres podstawowy*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 153–154; E. Wipszycka, H. Manikowska, A. Manikowski, W. Mędrzecki, *Historia dla każdego. Podręcznik. Tom 1 do rewolucji francuskiej. Szkoły ponadgimnazjalne zakres podstawowy*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 188–189; G. Wojciechowski, *Historia. Podręcznik do gimnazjum. Razem przez wieki. Zrozumieć przeszłość*, Poznań 2002, p. 151; J. Wróbel, *Odnaleźć przeszłość. Historia od starożytności do 1815 roku. Liceum ogólnokształcące, liceum profilowane, technikum*, Warszawa 2002, p. 145.

<sup>18</sup> B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego...*, op.cit. p. 142; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Wydanie drugie zmienione*, Gdynia 2004, p. 125; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Gdynia 2005, p. 125; T. Cegielski, W. Lengauer, M. Tymowski, *Ludzie, społeczeństwa, cywilizacje. Historia. Starożytność i średniowiecze. Część I. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Warszawa 2002, p. 245; B. Danowska, T. Maćkowski, *Przez wieki. Historia do klasy pierwszej gimnazjum. Zeszyt ćwiczeń z tekstami*, Gdańsk 2003, p. 68; Z.T. Kozłowska, I. Unger, P. Unger, S. Zajac, *Poznajemy przeszłość. Do końca XVII wieku. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Zakres podstawowy*, Toruń 2003, p. 135; Z.T. Kozłowska, I. Unger, P. Unger, S. Zajac, *Poznajemy przeszłość. Do końca XVII wieku. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego. Zakres rozszerzony*, Toruń 2005, p. 144; H. Manikowska, J. Tazbirowa, op.cit., p. 51; A. Paner, J. Iluk, *Historia. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich. Tom II. Średniowiecze*, Koszalin 1997, p. 302; H. Tomalska, *Od pierwszych cywilizacji do czasów nowożytnych. Historia dla szkół średnich zawodowych*, Warszawa 1996, p. 115; J. Ustrzycki, op.cit., p. 182; M. Węcowski, P. Węcowski, J. Czuby, op.cit., p. 154; E. Wipszycka, H. Manikowska, A. Manikowski, W. Mędrzecki, op.cit., p. 189; G. Wojciechowski, op.cit., p. 151; A. Wypustek, M.L. Wójcik, *Historia 1. Starożytność. Średniowiecze. Ze Świata do Polski przez Europę*, Warszawa–Wrocław 2002, p. 183.

<sup>19</sup> D. Bąkowski, op.cit., p. 125; W. Bobiński, op.cit., p. 265; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2002, p. 142; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Wydanie drugie zmienione*, Gdynia 2004, p. 126; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum...*, op.cit., p. 126; Z.T. Kozłowska, I. Unger, P. Unger, S. Zajac, *Poznajemy przeszłość. Do końca XVII wieku. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Zakres podstawowy*, op.cit., p. 144; Z.T. Kozłowska, I. Unger, P. Unger, S. Zajac, *Poznajemy przeszłość. Do końca XVII wieku. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego. Zakres rozszerzony...*, op.cit., p. 135; G. Kucharczyk, P. Milcarek, M. Robak, op.cit., p. 204; H. Manikowska, *Historia dla maturzysty. Średniowiecze. Podręcznik. Liceum ogólnokształcące. Zakres rozszerzony*, Warszawa 2003, p. 61; H. Manikowska, J. Tazbirowa, op.cit., pp. 51–52; D. Musiał, K. Polacka, S. Roszak, *Historia. Podręcznik dla I klasy gimnazjum...*, op.cit., pp. 94–95; D. Musiał, K. Polacka, S. Roszak, *Przez wieki. Podręcznik do historii...*, op.cit. p. 124; A. Paner, J. Iluk, op.cit., p. 302; K. Polek, M. Wilczyński, *Historia. Klasa 1. Ludzie i epoki. Podręcznik do historii obejmujący kształcenie w zakresie podstawowym w liceum ogólnokształcącym, liceum profilowanym i technikum oraz kształcenie w zakresie rozszerzonym w liceum ogólnokształcącym i liceum profilowanym*, Kraków 2002, p. 255; H. Tomalska, op.cit., p. 115; M. Tymowski, *Człowiek i historia. Część 2. Czasy średniowiecza. Kształcenie w zakresie rozszerzonym. Podręcznik dla liceum*

following authors: Bąkowski, Burda, Halczak, Józefiak, Szymczak, Danowska, Maćkowski, Kozłowska, Unger, Unger, Zając, Kucharczyk, Milcarek, Robak, Manikowska, Tazbirowa, Musiał, Polacka, Roszak, Paner, Iluk, Tomalska, Ustrzycki, Węcowski, Węcowski, Czubyty, Wipszycka, Manikowska, Manikowski, Mędrzecki, Wojciechowski, Wróbel.

The second field of analysis explored the language that the authors of textbooks and syllabi used to build the discourse about the baptism of Mieszko I. The applied linguistic means were explored here, i.e. mainly the presence of characteristic phrasemes and semantic transformations (epithets, metaphors, or periphrases). The analysis of this field allowed for distinguishing some linguistic means, which build what we call the semantics of breakthrough (prevailing in the investigated texts). The analysis of the keyword frequency indicated that the adjective 'pagan' and its noun forms – 'a pagan' and 'paganism' – occurred 42 times in various phrasemes. Juxtaposing the presentation of Slavism, especially its religious beliefs, with the presentation of Christianity shows the dominance of the old-new dialectics, where the 'new' functions as a synonym of civilization.

What seems characteristic for textbook narration about the christening of Poland is the phenomenon that is called the semantics of breakthrough. As the authors of textbooks argue, Mieszko's decision became a turning point in the history of Poland and Mieszko himself, who was a genius strategist that recognized and properly responded to historical circumstances<sup>20</sup>. This semantics is built by using the following phrasemes: "a great breakthrough; a decisive event in history (3 times); a historic decision and its consequences; long-term political benefits; a very beneficial decision for the country; an important political decision; one of the most significant events in the history of Poland; and the most important event of the rule (twice)".

The semantics of breakthrough is characteristic for thinking in the categories of radical turn from the past, which stands in contradiction to the statement of Anton

ogólnokształcącego, Warszawa 2002, p. 28; J. Ustrzycki, op.cit., p. 181; M. Węcowski, P. Węcowski, J. Czubyty, op.cit., p. 153; G. Wojciechowski, op.cit., p. 151; J. Wróbel, op.cit., p. 145.

<sup>20</sup> W. Bobiński, op.cit., p. 265; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2002, p. 141; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Wydanie drugie zmienione*, Gdynia 2004, p. 125; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2004, p. 141; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Gdynia 2005, p. 125; H. Manikowska, J. Tazbirowa, op.cit., p. 51; K. Polek, M. Wilczyński, op.cit., p. 253; H. Tomalska, op.cit., p. 114; G. Wojciechowski, op.cit., p. 151; J. Wróbel, op.cit., p. 142, 146; A. Wypustek, M.L. Wójcik, op.cit., p. 183.

Wessels about the ongoing inculturation rather than the radical suppression of the 'old religion' by 'the new' in European societies. The discourse of the breakthrough (turning away) emphasizes the exceptional character of baptism and attributing decisive significance to this event makes it a particular remembrance site. It is not difficult to notice that the way in which the baptism of Poland is presented in the examined history textbooks and curricula indicates the tendency to assign it a special place in the historical canon (which is a set of remembrance sites, as Andrzej Szpociński wrote). It should be also stated that this canon, like collective memory, is a social construct and it constitutes a pillar of the society's collective memory.

The last examined field consists in the analysis of the dominating images and the symbolics, which appear in the investigated texts. The most frequent images were the image of Mieszko I as a genius and far-reaching ruler, the images of Christianity, Western Christianized communities, and of the Church as the synonyms of civilizing advancement. Against this background, there is a picture of benighted Slavism, much more backward than the Christian West. At the same time, Christianity is presented as a powerful political force capable of generating efficient organizational forms that became models for the Christianized countries of Western Europe. As regards the symbolics of the examined texts, the dominating motif was the contact of the old and the new. Here, applying the old-new dichotomy gains a symbolic sense, which reaches far beyond situating Slavism (the old) and Christianity (the new) within the framework of the support of the former by the latter. What is old becomes a synonym of the unattractive past, which was unable to propose an interesting response to problems of the societies contemporary with Mieszko. What is new becomes a synonym of civilization and development in the political or cultural dimension. This symbolics is additionally enhanced by the above-mentioned semantics of breakthrough, which emphasizes the gap between old Slavism and 'new' Christianity. The semantics of breakthrough clearly indicates the large qualitative change related to Mieszko I's baptism. As subplots, the investigated texts also present (sometimes as forms not included in main texts) the symbols-legends of Popiel and Piast the Wheelwright<sup>21</sup>, as well as the legend on

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<sup>21</sup> B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2002, p. 138; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum. Wydanie drugie zmienione*, Gdynia 2004, p. 122; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2004, p. 139; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Gdynia 2005, p. 122; E. Pustuła, C. Tulin, *Od dziejów najdawniejszych do schyłku średniowiecza. Historia 1. Zakres podstawowy i rozszerzony*.

Mieszko's alleged blindness<sup>22</sup>. The blindness of the latter is a symbol of Slav 'paganism,' which gives way to Christian enlightenment. The old-new symbolics is broadened in this way by the fair-dark symbolics. Moreover, the symbolics of darkness corresponds with the underdevelopment of civilization (benightedness).

Whereas, the baptism of Mieszko I is undoubtedly an exceptional remembrance site for Poles – the founding event and a key one for the constitution of the historical canon – the so-called pagan reaction remains a not well known episode. This term is applied to the events from the 1130s, which reached their apogee in the outbreak of peasants' uprising in 1037. It was an insurrection of peasantry not only against the prince's rule, but it was also broadly against magnates and the 'Church people'. Peasants turned against growing tax duties by the prince and his people as well as against the Church 'tax' in the form of the tithe. Purely economic reasons do not fully explain the folk character of this uprising, which, as historians indicate, had a religious character in some parts of Poland. The rebels fought against the duties imposed by the Church, but they also acted in defense of the old customs and beliefs. This was the motif focused on in the analysis of school textbooks and syllabi.

In the analyzed texts, the events associated with the peasants' uprising are a part of a broader problem, i.e. the crisis of the Piasts' state, which resulted from the crisis of power. It seems significant that only very few of the texts contain the expression 'pagan reaction' (used nine times). In the majority of texts, the authors mention the peasants' rebellion<sup>23</sup>, the subjects' rebellion<sup>24</sup>, the rebellion of the population<sup>25</sup>, the rebellion of the slaves and peasants<sup>26</sup>, marginalizing the attempt at reconstituting the Slavic religion. However, this is usually done while the anti-Church nature of this movement is discussed. The way of reporting the events during the rule of Mieszko II and Bezprym becomes subordinate in the analyzed texts to the semantics of crisis and the period of Casimir the Restorer's rule – to the semantics of restoration. The issue of 'pagan reaction' gets blurred in these two types of semantics. The semantics of crisis is based on expressions dominated by

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*Wybrane scenariusze lekcji dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Gdynia 2003, p. 50; H. Tomalska, op.cit., p. 113; J. Wróbel, op.cit., p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> G. Wojciechowski, op.cit., p. 152; J. Wróbel, op.cit., p. 143.

<sup>23</sup> G. Kucharczyk, P. Milcarek, M. Robak, op.cit., p. 213; D. Bąkowski, op.cit., p. 130; B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2002, p. 150; A. Paner, J. Iluk, op.cit., p. 309.

<sup>24</sup> T. Cegielski, W. Lengauer, M. Tymowski, op.cit., p. 246.

<sup>25</sup> G. Wojciechowski, op.cit., p. 150.

<sup>26</sup> W. Bobiński, op.cit., p. 270.

the pictures of sinking into chaos, anarchy, ravaging the country, complete breakdown of power, devastation, plundering, and the collapse or disintegration of the state. As far as the frequency of key words is concerned, the word 'crisis' appears most often in different phrasemes (39 times). Nonetheless, the characterization of Casimir the Restorer's rule, during which the 'pagan reaction' was suppressed, is secondary to the semantics of restoration. The analysis of frequency shows the quantitative domination of expressions based on the word 'restoration' (it appears 83 times in its nominal, verbal, and adjectival form). The synonyms of 'restoration' (revitalization, merging, uniting, reconstruction, consolidation, rising from a fall) are used less frequently.

Content analysis shows that the motif of the so-called pagan reaction was treated rather marginally, melting up in the politically viewed crisis of the state and authority and the attempts to overcome it. The motif of 'religious rebellion' (brought about by the 'pagan reaction') became dominated by presenting the 'rebellion' as a peasants' revolt against both the rich and Church representatives, not as an attempt to reconstitute the 'old' religion (the exceptions, in which attention is laconically paid to the anti-Christian and pagan nature of rebellion, include: Burda, Halczak, Józefiak, Szymczak<sup>27</sup>; Burda, Halczak, Józefiak, Szymczak<sup>28</sup>; Burda, Halczak, Józefiak, Szymczak<sup>29</sup>; Manikowska<sup>30</sup>; Musiał, Polacka, Roszak<sup>31</sup>; Paner, Iluk<sup>32</sup>; Polek, Wilczyński<sup>33</sup>; Tymowski<sup>34</sup>; Węcowski, Węcowski, Czuby<sup>35</sup>; Wipszycka, Manikowska, Manikowski, Mędrzecki<sup>36</sup>; Wojciechowski<sup>37</sup>; Wróbel<sup>38</sup>). Obviously, the discourse in the categories of return to the Slavic heritage exists, but it generally takes place as a subplot. If a note appeared here that the folk rebellion was anti-Church or anti-Christian in its character, it usually co-occurred with the in-

<sup>27</sup> B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres rozszerzony. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego*, Rumia 2002, pp. 149–150.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 139.

<sup>29</sup> B. Burda, B. Halczak, R.M. Józefiak, M. Szymczak, *Historia 1. Część II. Średniowiecze. Zakres podstawowy. Podręcznik dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, liceum profilowanego i technikum*, Gdynia 2005, p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> H. Manikowska, op.cit., p. 102.

<sup>31</sup> D. Musiał, K. Polacka, S. Roszak, op.cit., p. 131.

<sup>32</sup> A. Paner, J. Iluk, op.cit., p. 309.

<sup>33</sup> K. Polek, M. Wilczyński, op.cit., p. 262.

<sup>34</sup> M. Tymowski, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>35</sup> M. Węcowski, P. Węcowski, J. Czuby, op.cit., p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> E. Wipszycka, H. Manikowska, A. Manikowski, W. Mędrzecki, op.cit., p. 190.

<sup>37</sup> G. Wojciechowski, op.cit., pp. 154–155.

<sup>38</sup> J. Wróbel, op.cit., p. 157.

formation that this involved only rebelling against 'Church people' and did not concern returning to the 'old religion.' The authors apply an unambiguously 'pro-state' orientation, which is understood as presenting the events of the rule of Mieszko II and Bezprym as a civilizing regression. It consisted in destroying modern (in those days) models of state organization (bringing Poland closer to the sphere of Western civilization) and reintroducing the archaic tribal organization. What should also be viewed in this perspective of regression is the occasionally appearing information about the return to the 'old' religion.

With regards to the prevailing images and symbolism, they overlap with the earlier distinguished semantics of crisis and restoration. In the case of the semantics of crisis, this concerns images such as devastation, violence, killing, burning, and disintegration. What appears in the case of the semantics of restoration are the images of reconstructing what was destroyed and reconstituting what was recognized as valuable. However, the symbolism present in the textbook discourse devoted to the rule of Mieszko II, Bezprym, and Casimir the Restorer has been subordinated to the chaos-order dialectics.

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